

GROSSE POINTE CIVIC NEWS

OFFICIAL PUBLICATION OF CITIZENS ASSOCIATION
OF GROSSE POINTE TOWNSHIP

Vol. 2

JUNE, 1925

Number 12

ANNUAL SCHOOL ELECTION AND MEETING OF SCHOOL ELECTORS June 8, 1925

Polls open in all Precincts
from 12:00 noon to 8:00 P. M.
Annual Meeting, Cadieux
School, 8 P. M. to 10 P. M.

CHALLENGERS TO BE APPOINTED

The Citizens' Association of Grosse Pointe Township is appointing challengers to be present in all voting places for the school election, June 8th. This action is in compliance with a resolution adopted by the Association, June 24th, 1924, which provides that the Association will appoint challengers to serve at any election within the township of Grosse Pointe whenever requested to do so by voters of the political unit holding the election.

Attention of voters is called to the qualifications necessary to vote at school elections, stated elsewhere in this issue.

Reports of illegal voting by persons not qualified as school electors have been called to the attention of the Citizens' Association. Challengers representing the Association at the election June 8th will be instructed to contest the ballot of any person who they believe is not qualified, and action will be taken by the Association to effect the prosecution of any person casting an illegal ballot.

ANNUAL MEETING OF THE CITIZENS' ASSOCIATION

The annual meeting of the Citizens' Association of Grosse Pointe Township will be held Tuesday evening, June 16, at 8:00 P. M. Unless otherwise announced, the meeting will be at the Cadieux School, 399 St. Claire Avenue.

The yearly reports of officers and the election of two members of the Executive Board, in addition to several other items of importance, will be taken up at this meeting.

ANNUAL SCHOOL ELECTION, JUNE 8th

The annual school election of Rural Agricultural School District No. 1 of Wayne County, and the annual meeting of the school electors will be held Monday, June 8th. Action of the electors at the last annual meeting moved the date forward from the second Monday in July to the second Monday in June.

Electors will ballot on two matters this year: (1) The election of a School Board Trustee for a three-year term; (2) The voting of bonds to the amount of \$255,000 for the purchase of a school site at Fisher Road and Grosse Pointe Boulevard. The site in question, comprising twenty-two and a half acres, is lot 7 of the J. L. Fisher subdivision, and has been approved by the board and the electors for the New Grosse Pointe High School. Statements by Dr. L. E. Maire and Dr. Walter G. Merdian, the candidates for school trustee, will be found in another column of this issue.

Attention is called to the requirements necessary to qualify as a school elector. Owners of property which is assessed for school purposes, who are citizens of the United States, twenty-one years of age, and who have been residents of the district for at least three months preceding the election, may vote on *all* questions. Property owned jointly by husband and wife entitle both to cast ballots. Persons possessing the qualifications of citizenship, age and residence stated above, who are parents or legal guardians of children between the age of five and twenty years, may vote for the election of school trustees but are not permitted to vote on bond issues or the raising of taxes. It is important that these requirements be understood by persons presenting themselves at the polls.

The polls will be open between the hours of 12:00 noon and 8:00 P. M. Precincts and voting places are as follows:

Precinct 1—All territory within the boundaries of Grosse Pointe Village and the township territory lying north of Grosse Pointe Village and west of the extended center line of Fisher Road. Voting booth, Cadieux School, 399 St. Claire Avenue.

Precinct 2—All territory within the boundaries of Grosse Pointe Park. Voting booth, Grosse Pointe Municipal Hall, 15115 Jefferson Avenue.

Precinct 3—All territory within the boundaries of Grosse Pointe Farms and all township territory lying north of Grosse Pointe Farms between the extended lines of the easterly and westerly village boundaries. Voting booth, Grosse Pointe Farms Municipal Hall, 54 Kerby Road.

Precinct 4—All territory within the boundaries of Grosse Pointe Shores and all township territory bounded by the northerly limits of Grosse Pointe Township, the Wayne County line, the northerly limits of Grosse Pointe Shores, and the extended easterly boundary of Weir Lane. Voting booth, Grosse Pointe Shores, Municipal Hall, corner of Lake Shore Road and Vernier Road.

The annual meeting of the electors will be held at the Cadieux School, between the hours of 8:00 P. M. and 10:00 P. M., for the transaction of any business that may properly come before it.

It is important that the qualified persons vote in the coming school election and that they attend the annual meeting. Grosse Pointe schools are growing at an increasingly rapid rate and each year require more money for maintenance, operation and new buildings. Determination of the major school problems and the electing of capable school officials rest with the electors of the district and their voting privilege should be exercised by them in a careful and intelligent manner. Such expression at the polls is essential in guiding the school board in the work it undertakes.

Grosse Pointe Civic News

Grosse Pointe, Mich.

P. O. Address, 316 E. Jefferson, Detroit.

H. P. Breitenbach, Consulting Editor.

H. G. Fishack, Editor.

Printed once a month as the official publication of the Citizens Association of Grosse Pointe Township, under the authority of the following board of directors:

H. P. Breitenbach, President.

Wm. M. Mertz, Secretary

Jos. L. Hickey, Treasurer.

Mrs. H. H. Sanger Chas. Parcells
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CHARGES AGAINST DEFER DISMISSED

Charges brought against George Defer of violation of the election laws in the village election in Grosse Pointe Park, March 9, 1925, were dismissed by Justice Arthur E. Gordon, May 19th.

Settlement of the Bastien case is still pending. After three hearings devoted to taking of testimony and hearing arguments the case was postponed until Monday, June 8th.

The trial of both Defer and Bastien before Justice Gordon sitting as examining magistrate, centers around their alleged interference with the rights and duties of challengers in the election mentioned. The hearing has been conducted to determine if the charges made were sufficient to warrant trial in circuit court.

Defer was released from further trial on the plea that he did not have the power to command a member of the election commission and could not be held responsible for any act performed at his suggestion. Justice Gordon agreed that although Defer's position as village president might have given his suggestion the cloak of a command, Bastien, as chairman of the election commission, was acting under state law and therefore was not forced to follow the orders of a village official.

The decision of the court definitely releases Defer from any legal responsibility.

The Citizens' Association took responsibility of bringing the case to the attention of the prosecutor's office because it is interested in the rights of voters to fair and unaltered election returns.

HIGH SCHOOL GRADUATION June 24th

Exercises marking the first graduation from Grosse Pointe High School will be held at George Defer School, Wednesday evening, June 24th, at 8:00 P. M. Dr. William D. Henderson, Director of University Extension Service at the University of Michigan, has been secured as commencement speaker. Dr. Henderson is widely sought throughout the state for commencement exercises and bears the reputation of being a public speaker of unusual ability. His coming to Grosse Pointe was made possible only by making the engagement several months prior to commencement.

The fact that the commencement exercises mark the graduation of the first class from Grosse Pointe High School is significant. Grosse Pointe schools have grown rapidly, even beyond the rate of Detroit schools, during the last two years. The need for additional high school facilities has been especially pressing, and the fact that our schools have expanded to carry out a full four year high school program under the handicap of congested quarters, is noteworthy. With completion of a new and adequate high school building and the corresponding expansion in curriculum and teaching staff, Grosse Pointe may expect a high school equal to any in the metropolitan area.

Following is a list of the first class to graduate from Grosse Pointe High School:

William E. Renaud, President; Virgil L. Walling, Vice-President; Emily F. Rybacki, Secretary; Richard J. Bundy, Treasurer; Ellen C. Adams, Mary J. Armstrong, Verge J. Case, Calvin R. Cutler, Irene M. Gamble, Bernice L. Hayward, Alberta P. Heckendorn, Dorothy S. Heckendorn, Theodore A. Hinz, Kathryn M. Jordan, Agnes J. Kerr, Alma G. Lepper, Steven F. Maire, Eunice M. McInerney, Kathleen I. Morrison, Ruby C. Nelson, Clark D. Newcombe, Norris H. Ouelette, Elizabeth H. Pardee, Marjorie F. Pardee.

A number of events centering around graduation are also scheduled. On June 19th, the Junior class will banquet the Seniors, high school faculty and school board at the Detroit Yacht Club. Class night, with special ceremonies by the Seniors, will be held in Defer School June 19th.

A joint concert given by the High School Orchestra and Glee Club will be given in Defer School auditorium,

June 11th. The operetta given by these organizations last March was widely attended and residents will undoubtedly welcome a second opportunity to hear the musical clubs.

June 5th all the schools in the district will take part in a Field Day, held on Ferry Field at St. Claire and Maumee Avenues. The annual May Day Festival, participated in by the grammar grades of all schools, was held on May 28th in Grosse Pointe Village Park.

In addition to the events mentioned, various school clubs are planning final meetings, prior to concluding the school year.

INDEPENDENCE DAY CELEBRATION

Due to the efforts of a small group of Grosse Pointe Village officials and citizens, plans are being formulated for an old-time patriotic celebration July 4th.

The program, to be given in the Village Park at Jefferson Avenue opposite University Place, will include a band concert, dancing, and addresses during the afternoon. An exceptional display of fireworks will be shown during the evening. The committee plans to obtain a speaker of prominence for the address of the afternoon and promises to make the entire program an enjoyable one for residents of the Village.

It is planned to raise the funds necessary by popular subscription. The committee in charge will detail solicitors to canvass the village, and in view of the patriotic and civic nature of the program, looks forward to a hearty response. Committee members are interested in making the day's activities of interest to all residents and hope for general support in carrying out their plans.

The town patriotic meetings, with which many of us are familiar, seem to have fallen into the discard during the past few years. With the increased use of the automobile has developed the habit of getting away from home on holidays. It is hoped that this year's effort in Grosse Pointe Village will be a successful forerunner of other civic gatherings.

ASSESSMENT ROLLS

A meeting of the Board of Review of Grosse Pointe Farms, to hear complaints relative to property owners' assessments will be held Friday, June 12th.

STATEMENTS BY CANDIDATES

Following are excerpts from the statements of candidates for school trustee at the coming election.

In reply to your request for a statement from me as a candidate for school trustee in Rural Agricultural School District No. 1, I submit the following:

1. I favor better schools for Grosse Pointe.

2. I favor the establishing of a scientific and properly detailed budget and a complete financial statement to be rendered at the annual meeting of taxpayers.

3. I favor promoting of the best teaching methods in Grosse Pointe schools and, if elected, will look to the Superintendent and teaching staff for guidance in introducing and maintaining modern school methods.

4. I favor the fullest co-operation of the school board with the electors at the annual meetings and all other times.

(Signed) LEWIS E. MAIRE.

The youth of our land have the priceless privilege of acquiring a foundation of knowledge that will lighten the burden of toil, and permit the girl and boy to make their way through life and reach that goal and highest ideal of human endeavor.

Grosse Pointe has made great progress in her school system but is still in its infancy with what is demanded for the future. Our schools are overcrowded, the buildings are inadequate to properly care for our pupils and the need of a new high school is imperative.

I should like to continue towards this larger program that is in view. I do not know of a greater honor than membership on this board, and during my past term have felt a great pride that I have been an humble part of this upbuilding. Its work is ennobling in that it takes the youth as youth and starts him in the path of rectitude and right thinking, and to be instrumental in this I deem it a most special honor. I am grateful to the Citizens of Grosse Pointe for their past support, and will be pleased to serve them still further should they elect me.

(Signed) DR. WALTER G. MERDIAN

SUMMER SESSION IN PUBLIC SCHOOLS

Arrangements are being completed to open Defer School during a part of the summer vacation for instruction in 5th, 6th, 7th and 8th grade subjects. The eight weeks' session will start June 29th and end August 21st. Classes will be held from 8:00 A. M. to 12:15 P. M.

Pupils of advanced standing in their classes will be promoted a half grade upon successfully completing the summer work. Pupils failing in work during the year will be able to make up deficiencies, and those with poor records can gain additional instruction in their weak subjects.

APPRAISAL OF SCHOOL BOARD ADMINISTRATION

During the spring of 1924, the Detroit Bureau of Governmental Research at the request of the Citizens' Association of Grosse Pointe Township, made a study of administrative organization and management of Rural Agricultural School District No. 1. The study pointed out that the criticism of the school board that existed was due largely to lack of proper administrative methods which could be corrected by substituting efficient control and centering responsibility in the proper school officials. Definite changes were proposed in a series of recommendations. Certain of the recommendations and the extent to which they have been put into effect are reviewed here to indicate the progress that has been made during the year and to point out conditions that are believed undesirable but that still exist.

Janitor Service

It was recommended:

"That the Superintendent be given complete authority over the maintenance and janitorial employees with the right to employ or discharge."

No change has been made in the selection or supervision of janitors. Appointments are made by the Board and increases in janitors' salaries have been considered at any time by the Board. The question of salaries and duties should be fixed definitely at the beginning of the year and adhered to.

Clerical Help

It was recommended:

"That the Superintendent be furnished with a clerk to handle the detail work of his office and such other work as the Board of Education may direct."

A clerk to carry out detailed work of the superintendent and the business manager was employed at the beginning of the school year and has materially relieved both officials. In addition to the full time services of this clerk who also acts as stenographer, the Board has from time to time employed additional stenographic service in typing the minutes. Inasmuch as such service is obtainable at the school offices, stenographic service in typing the minutes may not be necessary.

School Records

It was recommended:

"That all school records be kept in a suitable fireproof vault or safe and in proximity to the office of the Superintendent."

A safe cabinet for records was purchased but at present all records of the Board are not kept at the school office. Records of the minutes are

usually at the office of the attorney while the treasurer's books are still kept at his residence.

Budget Procedure

Recommendations with respect to budget procedure were made as follows:

1. That the Superintendent prepare complete detailed and classified requests for the ensuing school year, together with estimated revenues, and submit this to the President.

2. That the President prepare the budget including therein the Superintendent's estimates for the next year, and the actual expenditures for the past year, together with increases or decreases.

3. That the Board review the budget and have the Superintendent explain his requests.

4. That provision be made for a public hearing on the budget.

5. That the Superintendent submit an annual report, with his budget, showing plant inventory and building needs.

At present the budget is not prepared in sufficient detail to be informative, although it is an improvement over previous years. In 1923, the Board presented the budget in lump figures, totaling \$200,000 which was explained to be exclusive of primary school money shared by the district. Some improvement in this very unbusiness-like procedure has been made but a complete procedure is not now in effect. Further classification of the main items of budget is desirable. For example, the total given as principals and teachers might properly be divided into high school, intermediate, elementary, kindergarten, and special instruction.

Detailed classification for each major heading, such as janitor services, maintenance, repairs, sinking fund and interest, capital expenditures (buildings and sites), also should prevail. A complete and intelligent school budget has not yet been developed by the local Board.

Each year at the annual or adjourned annual meeting, school electors of the community vote taxes for the following year. A complete budget comparing proposed expenditures with those of the past fiscal period should be available at this meeting to guide electors in fixing the tax. Provision for a public hearing which would include an explanation of increases requested could be had at this meeting.

In connection with the budgeting of salaries provision should be made to show the estimate of funds to be required for special services. Profes-

sional services are required from time to time by the Board. In connection with the condemnation of school sites, the services of an attorney and real estate appraiser are required. The cost of such services are not shown in the financial report as separate items and no estimate of the expense is shown in the budget. Such costs are properly a part of the cost of acquiring the site, but should be listed separately in the financial statement and not lumped with the cost of the land or grouped with other items.

Accounting and Finance

With respect to accounting procedure, the Bureau report recommended:

1. That the schools maintain complete financial records in the office of the Superintendent.
2. That a complete financial audit be made at once and submitted with the current annual report.
3. That in connection with the audit there be outlined a complete system of accounting procedure that will be informative and that this system be installed.

A record of disbursements made on vouchers is kept at the School Board office, the vouchers being entered by number showing the nature of the payment and the fund from which it is drawn. Full financial records, however, are not available at the offices of the school board.

A complete financial audit of school funds as recommended by the Bureau report was not made during 1924. In July, 1924, a statement titled, "Finan-

cial Statement and Auditor's Report of Rural Agricultural School District No. 1, Township of Grosse Pointe, Wayne County, Michigan" was printed by the board. From the report published this audit appears to verify the bank balances at the beginning and end of the year and the receipts and disbursements during that period. No mention of bonds outstanding or a statement of the sinking fund available was given. The statement of bank balances does not show what funds are being held for current expenses and operation of the school plant or for capital expenditures (the unspent balance of bond sales) or for sinking fund. Unless such information is available, it is impossible to know anything about the large bank balance of \$353,938.40 that was on hand July 11, 1924. Any balance on that date should be sufficient to cover the operation of the schools until the fall tax is available, as well as the unexpended balance of bond sales and sufficient sinking funds. If the balance is in excess of this figure, it consists of taxpayers' money which should be spent for operation of the schools in lieu of raising taxes.

In commenting on the large surplus that has been carried from year to year in the general fund, the Bureau report stated:

"The law does not grant permission to raise other than 'necessary' tax money for school purposes, and the Board should limit its requests to sums shown as necessary by the estimate of expenses."

It recognized that a surplus sufficient to operate the schools until taxes could be collected in the fall should exist but recommended that any additional surplus be used for operating the schools and further recommended that "at the next annual meeting of the School Board, (July, 1924), the Board assess no school taxes other than strictly necessary."

Due to the persistent efforts of a single member of the present school board, an audit by a reliable firm of certified public accountants is now being made. This action was taken at a recent meeting of the school board and, finally, on unanimous approval of the Board, was placed in charge of the auditing committee with power to act. It is hoped the audit will be complete in its scope and will result in giving the school district a modern and understandable accounting procedure. If such is the result, it may be counted the outstanding achievement in this year's administration.

The several conditions pointed out indicates that measured by the recommendations set down in the Bureau of Governmental Research report some progress has been made but that other changes suggested have not been accomplished to date. Some effort might properly be made to consider the recommendations made a year ago.

Further discussions of the Bureau's recommendations are being reserved for a later issue of the Civic News.

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CITIZENS ASSOCIATION

GROSSE POINTE, MICH.

"Good Schools Do Pay"

Detroit Educational Bulletin (Jan., '24)

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